

April 7, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant to the Director
(Mr. Thuermer)

SUBJECT : Public Relations Visits to CIA
and a CIA Museum

1. I continue to support the concept of a CIA Museum to allow this Agency to share the rich heritage of American intelligence with both the American people and the employees of this Agency.

2. Certain thoughts on the concept, for your consideration, are:

a. Location: I like your suggestion that such a museum be close to the auditorium, to link briefings of visitors with a visit to the museum, but defer to the Office of Security as to security considerations and supplemental costs, both as to handling of visitors and basic museum security.

b. Access: I believe we should limit access to such a museum to groups of controlled visitors, such as the Presidential Classroom type visitor, and should not at this time even consider any type of off-the-street walk-in facility as at the FBI.


c. Age Level: The age level to be addressed in museum exhibits should be determined during early stages of consideration. This would determine both level of presentation and type of exhibit, whether highly simplified or highly technical, whether static displays or film/tape and sound mode, etc. I would suggest the young adult age as a focal level, rather than the working professional level.

d. Exhibits: While it is nice to display artifacts, documents and memorabilia, I would suggest that those displayed be free of a dramatically self-serving impact, leaning more on the traditional. High quality displays only should be used; a slap-dash presentation is worse than none at all. Film/slide/video should be leaned on heavily to explain such things as the intelligence process, the working or team-working of the intelligence community, etc., but they should be short loops, i.e. short time duration at each display. Since the life of the Agency has been relatively short, it might be well to have an "introduction to intelligence display" tracing intelligence quickly from Biblical times to its establishment in America, and perhaps some American Era presentations, i.e. one on intelligence in the Revolution, one dealing with the Civil

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War, one with World War II (WWI?), one for Korea, and the like. Also encompassed in one display could be the executive agents employed for intelligence purposes by the Presidents spanning the life of our nation--why not tell the the mission to Mexico of a founder of the New York Associated Press, for example, despite the present situation in regard to journalists? History is history, to be reported as it happened. I think there should be a non-rogues gallery, i.e. important people in American life who were involved at some time in their distinguished careers of service to the nation as intelligence officers or agents. Must we be ashamed that John Jay was the first chief of counterintelligence, that Franklin headed the first intelligence field station, that Vice President Elbridge Gerry was the first cryptanalyst in American intelligence, that Jefferson and Washington engineered kidnapping plots, if you will. These would not be intended or presented as self-serving, but, rather, for their historical significance in the viewer understanding there is, indeed, a heritage for U.S. intelligence. Why not have Prof. Lowe's Aeronaut Corps of the Civil War displayed alongside the U-2? I feel quite strongly that we should not attempt to re-interpret history, but should let it stand, without self-imposed censorship based on present-day values and concerns.

5. I do not believe we should have to go outside the Agency for design and production of the displays. Our own visual aids capability walked away with the Billings Medal, for example, in a highly competitive exhibition. I believe those are credentials enough to establish that museum exhibits could be constructed "in-house." I also believe that if the concept is approved by the Management Committee that a working committee be established to work on the museum, probably on their own time. I doubt there would be any shortfall within this Agency of personnel who would have both the expertise and the initiative to do so. In other words, I advocate a review and approval mechanism at the top, but no panel of passive advisors. Once basic exhibit themes, by Era and by Directorate orientation are approved, the task should go directly to small working groups for development. (Too many cooks...)


Curator
Historical Intelligence
Collection

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